

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 12860, of the Government of the District of Columbia, pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for a special exception under Paragraph 3101.42 to use all floors of the subject premises as a private school, pre-school and grades one through seven, consisting of 158 students and ten staff members in an R-4 District at the premises 200 South Carolina Avenue, S.E. (Square 765, Lot 803).

HEARING DATE: February 14, 1979

DECISION DATE: March 7, 1979

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject site is located in an R-4 District on the northeast corner of South Carolina Avenue and 2nd Street, S.E., with frontage on both streets. The site is known as 200 South Carolina Avenue, S.E.

2. The property consists of approximately 13,058 square feet and is improved with a large three-story building known as the Dent School. The majority of the site not occupied by the building and not located beyond the building restriction line is improved by a paved, impervious surface. The remainder of the lot consists of a lawn containing several mature trees.

3. The Dent School building was constructed in 1900. Until 1947, the building was used as a public school for grades kindergarten through seven. Approximately 175 students attended the school in 1945, shortly before it closed. From 1947 until very recently, the structure was used by the District of Columbia school system as a cabinet and equipment repair shop. Approximately thirty-four employees were located in the repair facility as of December, 1978.

4. The neighborhood immediately surrounding the subject property consists primarily of occupied row dwellings. To the west and east, on F Street and South Carolina Avenue respectively, are two and three story row houses. To the north, across an alley which abuts the property, are row houses and several low-rise apartment buildings. To the south, immediately across South Carolina Avenue, S.E., is a large park known as Garfield Park.

5. By a letter to the Board dated December 19, 1978, the District of Columbia Government, Real Estate Acquisition Division, stated it is in the process of leasing the Dent School premises to the Capitol Hill Day School for school purposes. The Day School was given permission to file for this application on behalf of the District Government. A right-of-entry permit was granted to the school on September 22, 1978.

6. The Capitol Hill Day School is a community-based, co-educational elementary school which has been in operation for ten years. Students, as well as faculty members, are drawn predominately from the Capitol Hill area. Students also come from all areas of the District of Columbia as well as Virginia and Maryland. The student body is culturally diversified; approximately one-third of its members are minority students. The school offers a scholarship program to foster economic diversity.

7. The Day School currently operates from two locations, 212 East Capitol Street, N.E., the Reformation Lutheran Church, and 620 G Street, S.E., the Christ Episcopal Church, with no known negative impact on or opposition from the neighborhood in those locations. Pre-kindergarten through grade three are offered at the East Capitol Street location; grades four through six are taught at the G Street site. The school's headmaster testified that these physically-separated facilities are inadequate and inefficient.

8. The Day School currently has 160 students. It projects that a maximum of 200 students will attend in 1981-1982 when the school offers grades seven and eight. The hours of operations are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for grades one through seven and from 9:00 a.m. to noon for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

9. There are twelve full-time and ten part-time faculty and staff members at the school. No more than two full-time teachers would be added when grades seven and eight are offered. No more than nineteen employees are present in the school at any one time and the average number of such employees was sixteen.

10. Testimony and a transportation survey presented by the school indicated that fifty-nine percent of the faculty and staff currently walk to work and eighteen percent take public transportation. Fifty-six percent of the students currently walk to school and seventeen percent take the school's bus or public transportation. It was indicated through testimony that the transportation patterns would not change when the two school locations were consolidated into one and the facility relocated.

11. The Day School proposes to lease the Dent School building from the District Government. In so doing, it intends to restore the exterior of the building making no major structural changes and remodel the interior so as to create classrooms, science and humanities facilities, laboratories, multi-use space, small offices and other educational facilities.

12. The proposed school is required to provide on-site one-hundred square feet of play area per child for the pre-school. The applicant has indicated that the entire top floor of the building, approximately 5,000 square feet, will be used for multi-use purposes including play area. The site plan also shows an area designated for small children's play which has recreational equipment located on the east side of the building. Garfield public park and play equipment is located across South Carolina Avenue to the south of the school which also offers optional play space.

13. By letter dated February 23, 1979, counsel for the applicant submitted parking calculations which indicate that the Day School is required by the Zoning Regulations to provide six on-site parking spaces. Such calculations were agreed to by James Fahey, the Zoning Administrator.

14. The Day School has spaces for seven on-site parking spaces and proposes to provide all seven spaces for the faculty, staff and visitors.

15. The Office of Planning and Development, by report dated February 9, 1979, recommended that the application be approved on the grounds that the proposed use of the Dent School will not become objectionable to adjoining or nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students or otherwise objectionable conditions and that the proposed use will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map. The Board so finds.

16. The Capitol Hill Restoration Society testified in support of the application. It found that there was no opposition from the surrounding neighbors, owners and tenants, that the proposed use was in conformity with the existing, abandoned school and that there would be no adverse impact on the neighborhood because of noise, traffic or number of students from the maximum level anticipated by the school. The CHRS further testified that if a variance from the parking requirements was needed, the CHRS would support such variances.

17. A member of the Planning and Zoning Commission of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B testified that it would make a recommendation to the ANC Commissioner's to support the application. ANC-6B had not been able to meet because of the snow storms to make a formal recommendation on the application.

18. There was no opposition to the application. There were letters in support of the application filed in the record.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Based on the findings of fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that, because of the ten-year history of the Capitol Hill Day School in two different locations, whereby the said Day School has had no known negative impact on or opposition from the neighborhood and because the location of the facility at the Dent School building is well suited and has strong community support, the operation of a private school within the R-4 District at this location is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property. In particular, the Board concludes that no excessive or unreasonable conditions are likely to exist as a result of the granting of this application. The Board further concludes that the seven on-site parking spaces to be provided by the Day School are ample parking spaces, as required by the Zoning Regulations, to accommodate the teachers and visitors who are likely to travel to and from the site by automobile. The Board concludes that, in view of the prior use of the Dent School building as a public elementary school as well as the purpose for which the building was constructed, the proposed use as a private elementary school is highly suitable and appropriate. The Board concludes that the applicant has substantially complied with the requirements of Paragraph 3101.42 of the Zoning Regulations.

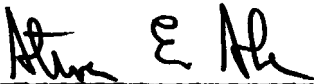
Based on the foregoing, the Board further concludes that the grant of this special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps, and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. Accordingly, it is ORDERED that the application is GRANTED SUBJECT to the following CONDITIONS:

1. Approval is limited to the Capitol Hill Day School only.
2. Enrollment shall be limited to 200 students and fourteen full time and ten part time staff employees.
3. The applicant shall provide seven parking spaces as shown on Exhibit No. 8 of the record.

VOTE: 3-0 (Charles R. Norris, William F. McIntosh and Chloethiel Woodard Smith to GRANT; Leonard L. McCants and Ruby B. McZier not voting, having recused themselves).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:


STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: 27 MAR 1979

THAT THE ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS ONLY UNLESS APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING AND/OR OCCUPANCY PERMIT IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER.